

CPC Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 27, 2021
Virtual Meeting

ATTENDEES: Suzanne Brennan (*absent*), Ann Burbine, Jill Caffrey, Skyler Chick, Mike Connor, Dan Fennelly, Penny Scott Pipes, Doug Smith, Meg Stillman

Additional Attendees: George McGoldrick, Marla Minier, Darryn Campbell, John Danehey, Gerry Rankin, Tony Vegnani, Andrew Goodrich, and other interested parties

Meeting was opened at 7:00 pm

Acceptance of Agenda – Mr. Fennelly made a motion to accept the agenda for September 27, 2021; Seconded by Ms. Burbine; unanimous vote (8/0).

Roll Call Vote: Ann Burbine - yes, Jill Caffrey - yes, Skyler Chick - yes, Mike Connor - yes, Dan Fennelly - yes, Penny Scott Pipes - yes, Doug Smith - yes, Meg Stillman - yes

APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS:

Discussion/Vote – Application: 90-foot Baseball Field Application – Darryn Campbell, Scituate Little League

Mr. Campbell said that he has confirmed that, in 2019, the Select Board unanimously approved the current proposed site of recreation field for the JV baseball field and at that time the discussion included the use of the \$400,000 Toll Brothers funds for the project. The amount of funding is still undetermined, but it appears that at least a portion will be allocated. The application request will be the balance from the appropriation. The new estimate is for \$600,000 in total funding.

Ms. Stillman said that she supports the project but is concerned that the application is still not complete and there are too many questions. She noted that other applicants seem to have been held to a much higher standard [*for completion prior to vote*].

Mr. Fennelly said that Little League was asked at a late date to put in the application for consideration at the Special Town Meeting (STM) as a way to move the project along.

Ms. Burbine agrees that this application is not complete. She also voiced concerns about adding to the already heavy use at Gates with the Senior Center, the Food Pantry and Recreation Department, etc.

Mr. Connor said that there are already games being played in that area and parking has not been an issue. He also discussed the broader recreation issues in the town and that the field should be built.

Mr. Smith agrees that we need a field but the application feels rushed; there are too many unanswered questions, i.e., who is going to manage it and what is the dollar commitment from Toll Brothers. He also noted that the Select Board has the authority to change the location for the field, due to concerns about the Gates location. He would like to have a master plan for the Gates complex before the field location can be finalized.

Ms. Caffrey supports the field but agrees there are too many questions at this stage.

Mr. Chick reiterated from earlier discussions that he believes there needs to be more planning before this can move forward. He thanked Mr. Campbell for providing more information but said that it is unfortunate that they are in this situation and that the Town should have submitted the application.

He would like to know what Town departments will manage the project and noted that the applicant has not shared any discussion with the Recreation Department about this project. He asked why, if this project is so important to the Town, it is being rushed through by an organization that should not be responsible for it.

The current funding request for both design and construction lacks details and does not include the process, such as an appropriate public forum. He would support a new application for design as a first step, which could serve as a master plan for the field. Ideally, it would include both the Gates and the Central field locations for review of the pros and cons for both sites.

Ms. Scott Pipes agrees the field project has been going in circles for years and would support the design phase at this stage.

Mr. Fennelly agreed there are many issues and stressed that, before they can go to STM, the Select Board needs to decide on the Toll Brothers funding. If that money is available right now it could be used for the design phase with no action from CPC. He said that the Recreation Department and the schools should be managing this project, like they did with the Athletic Fields project. He also agreed that there needs to be an abutters meeting to get feedback from the public before they can move forward

Mr. Vegnani agreed that the process has been going on for a long time and said that the Town will be taking on some leadership of the project. He said he was confused about why the project is contingent on the Toll Brothers money, noting that the funding is not guaranteed and that they may “decide to build bathrooms at the beaches” with the funds. He said he supported funding the design phase and suggested that it could include more than the field, like passive recreation.

After more discussion, the application was withdrawn and the applicant will resubmit a new application for the design phase in time for the next CPC meeting on October 4th. It was agreed that the construction phase application will be submitted for consideration at the Annual Town Meeting in April.

Discussion/Vote – Application: East Field, Border Street Land Acquisition (\$2,015,000) – George McGoldrick, Marla Minier

Mr. McGoldrick gave an update to the Board, noting that 180 emails have been sent to Town officials that support the acquisition of this property, and 170 individuals have donated over \$300,000 towards the goal of \$350,000. He confirmed that two abutters to the field have agreed to grant easements to the Town giving access to the 40-acre Hubble Preserve creating a contiguous 58 acre preserve.

Mr. Fennelly would like some assurance that the balance of the \$350,000 will be raised. He also would like to see in writing the abutters willingness to provide easements. He noted his concern that this large funding amount will set a precedent and has already caused one applicant to rethink his funding request. That said, he thinks it is very impressive that so much money has been raised. As long as everyone understands the future implications to the CPC then he supports putting it before the Town.

Ms. Stillman appreciates the energy and the community spirit that has gone into this effort and would like to see it go before the Town for a vote.

Mr. Chick agrees this is a lot of money but it is based on a different standard due to Chapter 61 status which dictates the price and is based on a bona fide offer. He supports acquiring land that is highly visible and has a pastoral agrarian feel to it that is located on the east side of 3A. Mr. Chick believes that what the CPC spends tonight could be replenished next year.

Mr. Chick requested a copy of the easement agreement with the abutters, noting that it will make the land more valuable. He also asked Mr. McGoldrick about the Gulf River Assn’s agreement to create a parking area.

Mr. McGoldrick said that prior to the STM they will provide evidence of the \$350,000 in the bank, which the Town can hold in escrow. They still have one month to work out the language for the easements and will have it for Town meeting. The Gulf River Assn will fund the parking lot once the Town determines the location. He noted that it will be a small gravel parking lot.

One of the abutters, Michael Gavin of 54 Border Street, confirmed for the Board that he is supportive of the project and will be donating a section of the land.

Mr. Smith confirmed that this is the first time the Board will be going by best use due to Chapter 61A status; it does set a precedent and he worries about future opportunities. There was an additional discussion about the value of land, fair market value and the public benefit.

Ms. Caffrey asked how they came up with the \$350,000 goal. Mr. McGoldrick said that, due to the deadlines imposed to the Town by Chapter 61A, it was a realistic amount they felt they could achieve.

Ms. Scott Pipes said that the Conservation Commission does not support the purchase of this property at this price due to its lack of value to the environment. She noted that there are other chapter land properties that may come up for sale that have more value to the environment and the Town. Ms. Scott Pipes said they also took into consideration what the developer was going to give back to the Town. They would have 7 ½ acres, a trail head and a parking lot, access to the Hubble Preserve, as well as tax revenue and the back taxes paid.

Ms. Burbine said that she understands what Conservation is saying and that the price is high, but she is also aware of the public perception that we are inviting too much development. This is a unique property that we can all see, not a trail or a path. She recommends putting it before the Town to decide.

Ms. Minier reminded the Board that the Gulf River needs to be protected too.

There were additional comments from residents in support of the land purchase. Mr. Danehey also reiterated what the developer is offering to the Town (*noted above and in previous minutes*). Developer Gerry Rankin, in response to some of the comments, said he is an honest man and has integrity.

VOTE - Ms. Burbine made a Motion to purchase the East Field land for \$2M and to include \$15,000 for closing costs for a total of \$2,015,000; Seconded by Mr. Chick; (6/2 in favor)

Roll Call Vote: Ann Burbine - yes, Jill Caffrey - yes, Skyler Chick - yes, Mike Connor - no, Dan Fennelly - yes, Penny Scott Pipes - no, Doug Smith - yes, Meg Stillman - yes (6/2 in favor)

Discussion Annual Meeting – tabled until Oct meeting.

New/Old Business – There was no new or old business

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. by unanimous vote (8/0 in favor).

Roll Call Vote: Ann Burbine - yes, Jill Caffrey - yes, Skyler Chick - yes, Mike Connor - yes, Dan Fennelly - yes, Penny Scott Pipes - yes, Doug Smith - yes, Meg Stillman - yes

Submitted by - Mary Sprague

Documents submitted

- 90-foot Baseball Field Amended Application

- East Field Amended Application